

June 2024

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# EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

The Averett University Employee Handbook provides essential information for University employees, including University history and values, benefits, policies and procedures, and other employment-related information. The information in this Handbook applies to administrators, faculty and staff, including full-time and part-time faculty and staff and adjunct faculty. All employees are encouraged to read this Handbook, the policies linked in this Handbook, and the policies and procedures located on the intranet. Information specific to faculty roles and responsibilities and specialized policies can be found in the Faculty Handbook, which can be found on the intranet and is intended to be read in conjunction with this Employee Handbook.

The Employee Handbook is intended to provide general information about the Averett workplace and how all members of the Averett community work together to achieve the University's mission to prepare students to serve and lead as catalysts for positive change. This Handbook is a *summary* of many, *but not all*, of the University policies and guidelines. Full policies are maintained in the Policy Library on the Averett intranet and are accessible to all employees. This Handbook does not include department-specific policies that apply only within certain departments or administrative units. When information applies only to a limited group of employees, it is so noted within this Handbook.

The contents of this Handbook, policies, manuals, other handbooks, and other information posted on the Averett University website or intranet do not create a contract, express or implied, between Averett University and any employee. The University may change information or policies within this Handbook from time to time, without prior notice. The University reserves the right, based on specific circumstances, to modify the policies and procedures in this Handbook, within the sole discretion of the University acting through the President or the University's executive officers.

*This Handbook presents summaries of selected policies. If there are questions that are not answered in this Handbook, please review the policies posted on the intranet, on SharePoint, for more information. If questions remain, contact the head of the appropriate department or the Chief Human Resources Officer.*

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See the Faculty Handbook and the Policy Library on the Intranet for complete policies and additional information.

ethnicity, citizenship status, disability, marital status, pregnancy, genetic information, or any other protected classification established by law. This policy applies to recruitment, hiring, promotion, transfer, compensation, seniority, layoff, recall, demotion, discipline, discharge, and all other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment. Averett University is committed to a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Everyone has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits discriminatory practices, including harassment. Therefore, Averett University expects that all relationships in the workplace will be professional and free of bias, prejudice, and harassment. Harassment of any employee based on or because of that race, color, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), age, national origin, ethnicity, citizenship status, disability, marital status, pregnancy, genetic information, or any other protected classification under law is strictly forbidden. Any employee who experiences such harassment should report it immediately to their supervisor or the Chief Human Resources Officer. See the Non-Discrimination Policy for additional information.

## **B. Title IX**

In compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Averett University does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of sex in any of its educational programs or activities, including against any employee, applicant for employment, student, or applicant for admission. Inquiries related to the application of Title IX at Averett should be referred to the University's Title IX Team:

Title IX Coordinator and Title IX Deputy Coordinator  
420 W. Main Street, Main Hall  
Danville, VA 24541  
(434) 791-7244  
TitleIX@averett.edu

Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, via email, phone, or mail at any time or in person during normal business hours using the contact information above. Averett's Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures can be found at <https://www.averett.edu/t9policy>.

Individuals may also inquire externally to the Department of Education:

Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-1100  
(800) 421-3481  
OCR@ed.gov  
<https://www.ed.gov/ocr>

## **C. Americans with Disabilities Act and Disability Accommodations**

Averett University is committed to complying with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Virginians with Disabilities Act. Averett University's policy is not to discriminate against any qualified employee or applicant with regard to recruitment, hiring, promotion, transfer, compensation, seniority, layoff, recall, demotion, discipline,

discharge, and all other terms, conditions, or privileges of employment because of such individual's disability or perceived disability so long as the individual can perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodation. Consistent with this policy of nondiscrimination, Averett University will provide reasonable accommodations to a qualified individual with a documented disability, as defined by the ADA, who has made the University aware of their disability, provided that such accommodation does not constitute an undue hardship on the University.

An employee with a disability who believes they need a reasonable accommodation (whether permanently or temporarily) to perform the essential functions of their job should contact their immediate supervisor and the Chief Human Resources Officer. Averett University encourages individuals with disabilities to notify the University and request reasonable accommodations consistent with their disability so that everyone can perform well without unnecessary hardships.

The University will not retaliate against an employee who seeks an accommodation under this policy and will not deny employment opportunities to the employee because of such a request.

#### **D. Religious Accommodations**

Averett University respects the religious beliefs and practices of all employees and will make, upon request, an accommodation for such observances when a reasonable accommodation is available that does not create an undue hardship on University operations. An employee whose religious beliefs or practices conflict with their job or work schedule, a University policy or practice, or with other aspects of employment, and who seeks a religious accommodation must submit a written request for the accommodation to the Chief Human Resources Officer. The written request must include the type of religious conflict that exists and the employee's suggested accommodation. A reasonable accommodation may include using paid leave or leave without pay, allowing an exception to a policy, where such exception that does not affect safety requirements, or a change in other aspects of employment.

The University will not retaliate against an employee who seeks an accommodation under this policy and will not deny employment opportunities to the employee because of such a request.

#### **E. Pregnancy Accommodations and Lactation Breaks**

Any employee who is unable to perform the functions of their job because of their pregnancy-related condition will be treated in the same manner as other employees with a temporary disability. In addition, the University will accommodate employees who request reasonable accommodation due to pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, unless the accommodation would cause significant hardship or expense. The University may require an employee to provide the following information from a healthcare provider indicating: (1) the date the accommodation became or will become medically advisable; (2) an explanation of the medical condition and the need for a reasonable accommodation, and (3) the probable length of time the accommodation should be provided. To request such an accommodation, please contact the Office of Human Resources.

November 2024



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Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-1100  
(800) 421-3481  
OCR@ed.gov  
<https://www.ed.gov/ocr>

## **C. Workplace Accommodations: Disability, Religion, Pregnancy, and Lactation**

Averett University strives to create an environment that is supportive and inclusive. The University is committed to equal opportunity in all aspects of employment and education. In compliance with federal and state laws and consistent with the University's Nondiscrimination Policy, Averett University does not discriminate against applicants for employment or employees on the basis of disability, religion, pregnancy, or pregnancy-

related conditions. It is the policy of Averett University to provide reasonable accommodations to support applicants through application and interview processes and employees to perform the essential functions of their jobs, so long as accommodations do not cause undue hardship to the University.

See the Workplace Accommodations Policy for additional information. To request a workplace accommodation, employee should follow the process outlined in the Procedures for Addressing Workplace Accommodations.

## **X. Employee Conduct and Expectations**

Averett University has implemented policies and standards of conduct to help employees work together to meet common goals and to be successful in their roles on campus. The University has developed an Employee Code of Conduct and Ethics that includes conduct-related policies and other behavioral expectations. Employees are encouraged to review the Employee Code of Conduct and Ethics in its entirety and the policies linked therein. Select policies are summarized in this section.

### **A. Employee Reporting Responsibilities**

Averett University is committed to the safety of students, employees, and visitors and is compliant with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (Clery Act) and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. As part of our commitment to safety and compliance, the University requires certain employees to submit reports about sexual misconduct and other crimes. To assure that employees are trained and prepared to fill these roles competently, the University will make training programs and training videos available to employees. Employees are required to complete these training programs during work hours, as part of their normal employment schedule.

#### **i. Sexual Misconduct Mandatory Reporter**

Averett University prohibits sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and retaliation for reporting or cooperating with the investigation into any of these actions (collectively, “sexual misconduct”).

Averett is committed to fostering a climate free from sexual misconduct. The University encourages all members of our community to participate in creating a safe, welcoming, and respectful environment on campus. Ultimately, each member of the community is expected to assume responsibility for their own conduct, to report behaviors that may violate Averett policies, and to take reasonable and prudent actions to prevent, stop, and report acts of sexual misconduct.

In compliance with Title IX and its implementing regulations, Averett has designated all faculty and staff as Mandatory Reporters, with the exception of employees in Counseling and Health Services and the University Chaplain. Mandatory Reporters are employees who are required to report any information received regarding sexual misconduct (sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and retaliation), whether the conduct reportedly occurred on- or off-campus and regardless of when it reportedly occurred and who was reportedly involved (employees, students, visitors, or other non-affiliated

OP 805

Effective September 18, 2024



**Policy Title:** Workplace Accommodation Policy

**Policy Oversight:** Human Resources, Chief Human Resources Officer

**Policy Application:** This Policy applies to all employees, Graduate Assistants, and applicants for employment.

**Contact Information:** ktune@averett.edu

**Policy Review and Approval:** This Policy will be reviewed every three years after initial approval and will be approved by the Vice President and Chief Financial Officer.

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#### **I. Policy Statement**

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#### **II. Purpose of Policy**

- To comply with state and federal laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Pregnancy Discrimination Act, Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, Providing Urgent Maternal Protections for Nursing Mothers Act, and the Virginia Pregnant Workers Fairness Act.
- To assure equal employment practices and equal access to employment opportunities

#### **III. Scope**

This Policy applies to all Averett employees; including part-time employees, temporary employees, and Graduate Assistants and student workers (when serving in an employment capacity); and applicants for employment during the application and interview process.

#### **IV. Jurisdiction**

This Policy applies regardless of where an employee is working: at any Averett location, from home, or at a remote location. This Policy applies, in limited circumstances and for some accommodations, at events or meetings off-campus during which an employee is representing Averett.

OP 805

Effective September 18, 2024

## V. Definitions

- A. **Disability:** A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity.
- B. **Essential Job Functions:** The fundamental responsibilities of a job that an employee must be able to perform, with or without reasonable accommodation.
- C. **Interactive Process:** A good faith, flexible communication process between an employee or applicant requesting a reasonable accommodation and a decision-maker to determine a reasonable accommodation.
- D. **ADA Reasonable Accommodation:** Any modification or adjustment to a job or the work environment that will enable an applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the application process or to perform essential job functions.
- E. **Pregnancy-related Accommodation:** Any reasonable modification or adjustment to a job application process or the work environment that will enable an applicant or employee who is pregnant or has a pregnancy-related condition to participate in the application process or to perform essential job functions.
- F. **Religious Accommodation:** Any reasonable modification or adjustment to a job application process or the work environment to allow an individual to practice or observe their sincerely held religious beliefs, including the observance of the Sabbath and other holy days.
- G. **Retaliation:** Adverse treatment of an individual who files a report or complaint, exercises their rights under University policy or the law, or participates in University or external investigations.
- H. **Undue Hardship:** An action requiring significant difficulty or expense when considered in light of factors such as the University's size, financial resources, and the nature and the structure of its operation.

## VI. Accommodation Requests

Employees and applicants for employment may request an accommodation(s) that is related to a disability or to pregnancy, childbirth, or a related condition and for religious observations or practices.

The University will provide accommodation when the accommodation would not impose an undue hardship or fundamentally alter the nature of an employee's position. Averett is not required to lower quality or production standards to make an accommodation, nor is the University obligated to provide personal use items such as glasses or hearing aids.

### A. Job Applicants

Job applicants should request accommodations from the Chief Human Resources Officer.

### B. Employees

Employees should follow the steps in the accompanying Procedures to request accommodations and participate in the interactive process.

OP 805

Effective September 18, 2024

## **VII. Lactation Breaks and Spaces**

Employees are entitled to reasonable break time and a private space, other than a bathroom and that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public, to express breastmilk for up to one year after their child's birth.

The frequency and duration of breaks will vary based on the needs of the employee. Non-exempt employees must clock out for any lactation breaks outside of, or that extend beyond, their normal breaks and lunch.

Employees in need of lactation breaks and/or a private lactation space should follow the process outlined in the accompanying Procedures.

Employees are responsible for storage of expressed milk while on campus.

## **VIII. Supervisor Responsibilities**

### **A. Impacted Work Performance**

Supervisors must refer employees to the Chief Human Resources Officer and notify the Chief Human Resources Officer when they are informed that an employee's work performance is being impacted by a physical or mental impairment, conditions related to pregnancy, or concerns related to their ability to take part in religious ceremonies or practices.

### **B. Accommodation Requests**

Supervisors must maintain the privacy of employees requesting accommodations. Employees requesting accommodations should be directed to the Chief Human Resources Officer. Supervisors must notify the Chief Human Resources Officer when any employee requests an accommodation and provide the Chief Human Resources Officer any additional information the employee shared regarding the accommodation request.

### **C. Accommodating Employees**

Supervisors are expected to implement accommodations approved by the Chief Human Resources Officer at the conclusion of the interactive process. Concerns about approved accommodations should be discussed only with the Chief Human Resources Officer, and any necessary changes to approved accommodations can be granted only by the Chief Human Resources Officer.

### **D. Essential Job Functions**

Supervisors should ensure that employees' job descriptions are kept up-to-date with a list of essential duties that must be carried out by each employee.

### **E. Retaliation and Departmental Concerns**

Supervisors must contact the Chief Human Resources Officer if an employee receiving accommodations shares concerns about retaliation or if any employee reports concerns about the impact of an employee's accommodations on the workload or performance of other employees.



OP 805

Effective September 18, 2024

## **IX. Prohibited Practices**

### **A. Interview and Hiring Processes**

Hiring managers and employees participating in search processes shall not ask job applicants about conditions or circumstances that may require an accommodation or ask any questions regarding the nature of a disability or other conditions or circumstances disclosed related to disability, pregnancy, religion, or any other legally protected status. If an applicant discloses a disability, pregnancy, or religion, hiring managers and employees participating in the search processes shall consider only the applicant's qualifications when making an employment decision.

### **B. Workplace Practices**

- Supervisors shall not provide accommodations outside of those approved by the Chief Human Resources Officer.
- Supervisors shall consider only an employee's performance when making decisions about raises, promotion, evaluations, or discipline. An employee's disability, religion, pregnancy, and accommodations may not be considered.
- Supervisors shall not ask employees invasive questions about their disability, pregnancy, medical history, religion, or the employee's need for accommodations.

## **X. Privacy**

All documentation and information shared by individuals who are requesting workplace accommodation will be maintained by the Office of Human Resources and will only be shared to the extent that it is needed to determine whether to approve and implement an accommodation.

Medical documentation will be kept separate from an employee's personnel file and will be accessible only to the employees in the Office of Human Resources.

## **XI. Supportive Measures for Victims of Sexual Assault, Stalking, Dating Violence, and Domestic Violence**

Employees who have experienced sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, or domestic violence and who need workplace modifications to increase safety, to participate in internal or law enforcement processes, or for other related reasons, may request supportive measures to the Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Deputy Coordinator pursuant to Averett's Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy and Employee Non-Title IX VAWA Policy.

## **XII. Financial Responsibility for Reasonable Accommodations**

Costs related to approved accommodations are the responsibility of the University.

## **XIII. Consequences of Noncompliance**

Retaliation, against an employee or applicant, by any employee will be addressed in accordance with Averett's Employee Code of Conduct and Ethics.

Supervisors and members of hiring committees who violate the provisions in this Policy may be subject to discipline in accordance with Averett's Employee Code of Conduct and Ethics.

OP 805

Effective September 18, 2024

Reports of discrimination and harassment on the basis of a protected class; including disability, pregnancy or parenting status, and religion; will be addressed pursuant to Averett's Nondiscrimination Policy.

#### **XIV. Supporting Documents and Resources**

Procedures for Requesting Workplace Accommodations

Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy

Employee Non-Title IX VAWA Policy

FMLA Policy

Non-Discrimination Policy

Flexible Work Policy

Workplace Accommodations Request Form

Workplace Accommodations Medical Documentation Form – print and sign

Workplace Accommodations Medical Documentation Form – fill and sign

#### **XV. Policy History**

**Policy created:** September 15, 2024 (Approved by the President)

Procedures for OP 805  
Effective September 18, 2024



## **Procedures for Requesting Workplace Accommodations**

**Policy:** Workplace Accommodations Policy

**Contact Information:** Chief Human Resources Officer, [ktune@averett.edu](mailto:ktune@averett.edu)

**Approval Date:** September 15, 2024 by President Tiffany Franks

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### **I. Accommodation Requests and Interactive Process**

Employees in need of reasonable accommodations related to disability, religion, or pregnancy should submit a request to the Chief Human Resources Officer using the Workplace Accommodation Request Form. Employees who need assistance submitting the online request form should contact the Chief Human Resources Officer. To request a lactation break and/or space, employees should contact the Chief Human Resources Officer directly and follow the process outlined in Section I(D) of these Procedures; a Workplace Accommodation Request Form is not required.

Employees are expected to participate in good faith in these procedures. Failure to do so could delay consideration of a request.

After receiving a request for accommodations, the Chief Human Resources Officer will take the following steps, in no particular order:

- Meet with the employee to review the request, including the accommodation(s) the employee has requested and the barrier(s) the employee is experiencing.
- Meet with the employee's supervisor to review essential functions of the employee's position.
- Review documentation, if applicable.

The Chief Human Resources Officer may review additional or alternative accommodations, including, when applicable, Family Medical Leave Act leave, with the employee during the interactive process.

#### **A. ADA Reasonable Accommodation Requests**

Documentation from a healthcare provider may be required when employees request reasonable accommodations to mitigate the impact of a disability on the employee's ability to perform essential functions of their job. Documentation should provide sufficient information to indicate that the employee has a condition that significantly impacts one or more major life activity, including the nature of any impairment(s), severity, duration, activities limited by the impairments, and the extent to which the impairment(s) limit the employee's ability to perform the job's essential functions.

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**B. Religious Accommodations Requests**

Employees will be asked to provide sufficient information to indicate that a conflict exists due to a sincerely held religious belief or practice and that the accommodation requested will resolve the conflict without creating an undue hardship.

**C. Pregnancy Accommodation Requests**

Accommodations requests from employees with pregnancy-related conditions that significantly impact their ability to perform essential functions of their job will be evaluated under Section (I)(A) of these Procedures.

**D. Lactation Breaks and Spaces**

Employees are encouraged to contact the Chief Human Resources Officer in advance of taking leave, when possible, so changes to spaces can be made, if necessary, and a plan outlined for any necessary coverage during break times.

The Chief Human Resources Officer will work with the employee and the employee's supervisor to identify a private lactation space when the employee does not have a private office.

When possible, lactation breaks should be scheduled during an employee's normal break and meal times and/or when workflow allows. Break times may vary day-to-day according to the needs of the employee and/or the needs of the department.

Accommodation approvals for lactation breaks will provide an approximate number of break times and approximate length of time allotted for breaks, as determined through the interactive process. The University recognizes that the number of breaks and amount of break time needed may vary over time. The employee should communicate any needed changes to their accommodations, in writing, to their direct supervisor and the Chief Human Resources Officer. Reasonable break time will be provided unless the Chief Human Resources Officer determines it would create an undue hardship on University operations.

**II. Accommodations Determinations**

The Chief Human Resources Officer will notify the employee, in writing, of the outcome of the interactive process. If the Chief Human Resources Officer denies the employee's request, in whole or in part, or approves alternative accommodations, rationale for the decision will be provided. Employees may appeal pursuant to Section V of these Procedures.

**III. Implementation of Approved Accommodations**

In general, an employee's direct supervisor is responsible for implementing an approved accommodation. If the employee or supervisor has questions or concerns about the implementation of any accommodation, they should contact the Chief Human Resources Officer.

**IV. Requests to Change or Update Accommodations**

When an employee or a supervisor determines that an accommodation is not effective or if an employee's accommodations needs change, they should contact the Chief Human Resources Officer to resume the interactive process. The Chief Human Resources Officer may take any steps outlined in Section I.

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**V. Appeals**

When the Chief Human Resources denies a request for accommodations or approves an alternative accommodation, the employee may appeal the Chief Human Resources Officer's decision. Appeals should be made in writing to the Vice President and Chief Financial Officer. The Vice President and Chief Financial Officer's decision is final.